

Feds Release Flight-Related Dog Incident Data

Two dogs were found injured, one found dead during or after flights.

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Two dogs were injured, one was found dead and another was lost while on airplanes during and after domestic flights in December, according to a U.S. Department of Transportation report released Feb. 7.

In the most recent incident, a small Greyhound was found injured in his kennel upon arrival of an Alaska Airlines flight to Seattle on Dec. 18. According to the airline's incident report, the dog chewed on the front wire gate of kennel and got her head stuck in the gate.

An airline investigation found that all protocol was followed; therefore no procedural corrective action was taken.

Three days prior, on Dec. 15, there was another Alaska Air incident where a small female dog of unidentified breed managed to get out of her kennel after her flight arrived in Seattle. She then managed to escape the aircraft. The dog was found running loose on a ramp and eventually caught.

She was taken to a veterinarian and was found to have suffered a broken leg and abrasions. After the incident, the airline says, it conducted employee training to ensure that prior to accepting kennels for flight, they are inspected to insure they're properly secured.

On Dec. 3, a pug-nosed Bulldog traveling from Long Beach, Calif., to Seattle was found dead after the flight's arrival. No medical issues were noticed at the time of the dog's loading onto the aircraft, according to Alaska Airlines.

A necropsy was conducted, but its results were not shared with Alaska Air, according to the airline's incident report.

A lost-animal case occurred on Dec. 12 after a Northwest Airlines flight to Memphis, Tenn. According to the Northwest's report on the incident:

"The dog arrived at Memphis ... and was signed-off and released to the customer at Northwest's cargo facility. The customer wanted to place a leash on the dog, but the dog's collar was lying in the bottom of the kennel. The dog escaped when the Northwest agent opened the kennel door to allow the consignee to place the collar on the dog."

Despite an extensive search airport and airline personnel could not find the dog. The dog remained at large until found and turned in by a good samaritan on Jan. 7, 2007. Following the incident, Northwest reminded personnel accepting and handling live animals of its policy that kennel doors are not to be opened except when necessary to comply with existing regulations.

According to U.S. Department of Transportation statistics, there were a total of 26 animal fatalities – mostly dogs – who died before, during, or after air transport in 2006. Eleven animals were injured and 12 were lost at airports, according to the data.